

TATE FILM

ASSEMBLY: A SURVEY OF RECENT ARTISTS' FILM AND VIDEO IN BRITAIN 2008-2013

Testaments I & II

Tate Britain, Clore Auditorium

I: Sunday 2 February 2014, 15.00–17.00

II: Monday 3 February 2014, 19.00–21.00



Sarah Turner, *Perestroika* 2009, video still Courtesy the artist. © Sarah Turner



Duncan Campbell, *Bernadette* 2008, video still Courtesy the artist. © Duncan Campbell. Tate. Presented by Tate Patrons 2010

This programme examines the complexities of nationalism, propaganda and personal memory through documentary and archive footage.

**DUNCAN CAMPBELL, PHIL COLLINS,
JOHN SMITH, SARAH TURNER**

The discussion following Testaments II will be chaired by Nina Power.

Nina Power is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at Roehampton and also teaches Critical Writing in Art & Design at the RCA. She has published many articles about European Philosophy, politics and culture.

Assembly: A Survey of Artists' Film and Video in Britain 2008–2013 is curated by Stuart Comer, formerly Tate, now chief curator Media and Performance, MoMA; George Clark, Tate Modern; and Melissa Blanchflower, Tate Britain; with independent curators Simon Payne and Andrew Vallance.

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ASSEMBLY: A SURVEY OF RECENT ARTISTS' FILM AND VIDEO IN BRITAIN 2008 – 2013

Assembly is a major survey of internationally acclaimed single-screen artists' film and video. Including more than eighty artists, the list is drawn from thirty-six leading international film specialists who were invited to nominate outstanding recent works. Screenings take place at Tate Britain in the Clore Auditorium: on Sundays, feature length films are shown, and on Mondays curated programmes of shorter films are followed by discussions with invited speakers and the artists. Each weekly theme suggests a contested area of practice and prompts a dialogue that continues from one screening to the next, encouraging discussion and debate about contemporary film and video.

The popularity of film and video has surged during the last decade, with screenings occurring in numerous venues from galleries to film festivals, from television to online. The development of digital technology has particularly impacted the distribution, aesthetics and accessibility of artists' cinema. Reflecting this expanded field, *Assembly* is a unique opportunity to consider what is being produced here and now, throwing into relief and celebrating differences across various artists' practices in the medium.

PROGRAMME NOTES

TESTAMENTS I
Sunday 2 February 2014
15.00–17.00

PERESTROIKA
Sarah Turner, 2009
HD video, 118 min

Mining the mechanics of memory to uncover both what is forgotten and what is recollected, *Perestroika* re-enacts a journey on the Trans-Siberian railway in 1987–8 and again twenty years later. With geography serving alternately to trigger streams-of-consciousness both elegiac and uncanny, Turner presents a ghost story unlike any other where the personal and the political seamlessly overlap.

Sarah Turner
Lives and works in London

Her feature films include *Ecology* (97 min, 2007) and *Perestroika* (118 min, 2009). Turner's short films have headlined Midnight Underground and been broadcast on Channel 4. Sarah Turner is Director of Fine Art at University of Kent.

TESTAMENTS II
Monday 3 February 2014
19.00–21.00

MARXISM TODAY (PROLOGUE)
Phil Collins, 2010
HD Video, colour and black & white,
sound, 35 min

Premiered at the Berlin Biennale in 2010, Collins portrays monologues by Marxist-Leninist teachers from the former German Democratic Republic. This film takes the lives of ordinary people and their recollections of the ways in which ideology permeates the everyday minutiae of living. The testimonies given by the artist's subjects probe notions of complicity, disillusionment and uncertainty.

Phil Collins (born 1970)
Lives and works in Berlin and Cologne
Collins will present a major new film work as part of the Common Guild Cultural Programme for Glasgow (2014). Recent exhibitions include *In Every Home a Heartache* at Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2013) and Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane (2012). Collins was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2006 and has six works represented in Tate's collection

FLAG MOUNTAIN
John Smith, 2010
HD video, 8 min

Blurring the boundaries of narrative and documentary in his avant-garde filmmaking practice, Smith here draws upon quotidian realities to capture aspects of life on both sides of a contested terrain. *Flag Mountain* juxtaposes the micro and macro in Nicosia, capital of the island of Cyprus and the last divided city in the world: governed by Turkey in the North and the Republic of Cyprus in the South.

John Smith (born 1952)
Lives and works in London
Recent solo exhibitions include Turner Contemporary, Margate and Weserburg Museum of Modern Art, Bremen (both 2012). Group exhibitions include *Has The Film Already Started?* at Tate Britain (2011). *Flag Mountain* was awarded the ARTE prize for European Short Film (2010) and Smith was the recipient of The Jarman Award 2013.

BERNADETTE
Duncan Campbell, 2008
Video colour and black & white,
sound, 38 min
Tate. Presented by Tate Patrons 2010

This film interweaves existing footage with sound and animation to fuse reality and fiction in the portrayal of Bernadette Devlin. An Irish Socialist and Republican, political activist and the youngest female British Member of Parliament, Devlin was appointed at the age of 21 in 1969 and serving until 1974. Vintage 16mm films and stills from Belfast City Archives are collaged together to construct a narrative of Devlin's political life, which in turn offers an insight into the 'Troubles' in the north of Ireland. The film introduces personal, sometimes intimate, footage alongside scenes of the young activist engaged in public protests, speeches and interviews.

Duncan Campbell (born 1972, Dublin)
Lives and works in Glasgow
Select solo exhibitions include *Make It New John* at Artists Space, New York (2010) and Art Now Lightbox, Tate Britain (2009). Campbell has been the recipient of the Paul Hamlyn Award and the Balaise Art Prize (both 2008).



Phil Collins. *Marxism today* (prologue), 2010. HD video; colour and black & white, sound; 35 min. Courtesy Shady Lane Productions.



John Smith. *Flag Mountain* 2010, HD video still
Courtesy the artist, LUX, London and Tanya Leighton Gallery, Berlin. © John Smith